

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01 RSR-01

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R 031923 Z JUL 73

FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8732

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMCONSUL RECIFE

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 2311

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SOCI, BR

SUBJECT: CNBB LEADER CONCERNED OVER IMPLICATIONS OF ANDERSON
ARTICLE

REF: STATE 119207

1. A HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCE INFORMED POLOFF THAT THE NATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF BRAZILIAN BISHOPS' S (CNBB) SECRETARY GENERAL,
DOM IVO LORSCHETER, WAS EXTREMELY CONCERNED OVER REPERCUSSIONS
ANDERSON ARTICLE " POLITICAL OPPRESSION IN BRAZIL" OF JUNE
1 7 MAY CAUSE BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE GOB.

2. APPARENTLY HAVING RECEIVED COPY OF ARTICLE FROM
FOREIGN SOURCES SINCE NO REFERENCE MADE TO STORY IN
BRAZILIAN PRESS, DOM IVO SAID THAT HE WAS UNAWARE ANY
DOCUMENT ON POLITICAL OPPRESSION BY A " SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE"
WAS PRESENTED TO THE CNBB CONFERENCE IN SAO PAULO LAST
FEBRUARY. HE FURTHERMORE SERIOUSLY DOUBTED THAT SUCH
A DOCUMENT HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED EVEN INFORMALLY. HE
HAD NEVER HEARD OF " COMMITTEE FOR SOLIDARITY WITH
POLITICAL PRISONERS OF BRAZIL," SUPPOSEDLY LED BY GROUP
OF PRIESTS.

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3. DOM IVO HAS BEGUN AN IN- HOUSE INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE IF THE GROUP EXISTS, AND WHO MAKES UP ITS MEMBERSHIP.

4. WHILE DOM IVO REPORTEDLY BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT THE CHURCH HAS THE RIGHT AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO CONDEMN INJUSTICES, INCLUDING TORTURE AND VIOLENCE WROUGHT AGAINST MAN BY THE GOB OR ANY OTHER INSTITUTION, HE FEELS EQUALLY STRONG THAT THE CHURCH MUST DIRECT ITS CRITICISM AT THE OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE IN SUCH A WAY TO CAUSE THEM TO INVESTIGATE THE CHARGES AND TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION. THOUGH ADMITTING THAT THE CNBB' S INFORMAL LIAISON MECHANISM TO ALERT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF ABUSES AND INJUSTICES HAS NOT BEEN ENTIRELY EFFECTIVE IN MEETING THE PROBLEM, HE OPPOSES ATTEMPTS TO ATTACK THE REGIME FROM A FOREIGN PEDESTAL THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS.

5. HE MAINTAINS THAT SUCH EXTERNAL CAMPAIGNS ONLY COMPLICATE THE CHURCH' S ATTEMPT TO COMBAT THE EXCESSES OF THE MORE REACTIONARY ELEMENTS WITHIN THE REGIME.

6. DOM IVO IS CONCERNED THAT THE MENTION OF A PRIEST' S COMMITTEE IN ANDERSON ARTICLE MAY STRENGTHEN THOSE ELEMENTS DISPOSED TO ATTACK THE CHURCH AND LIMIT ITS PROGRAMS IN BRAZIL.

7. TO FORESTALL POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS, HE AND SEVERAL OTHER CATHOLIC LEADERS ARE PLANNING TO MEET PRIVATELY WITH GOVERNMENT CONTACTS NEXT WEEK TO REITERATE THE CHURCH' S POSITION ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN BRAZIL. THEY INTEND TO STATE THAT, WHILE THE CNBB CAN VERIFY MANY OF THE CASES TO WHICH THE ANDERSON ARTICLE REFERS AND FINDS THEM DEPLORABLE AND MORALLY REPREHENSIBLE, IT DID NOT, NOR DOES IT PLAN TO, USE THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS TO REGISTER ITS DISAPPROVAL OF THESE PRACTICES.

8. COMMENT: DOM IVO' S REACTION TO THE ANDERSON REVELATIONS IS NOT SURPRISING. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT WASHING BRAZIL' S DIRTY LAUNDRY ABROAD WILL GAIN ANYTHING

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AND HAS LONG ADVOCATED A STRICT POLICY OF DELIVERING AT HOME -- EITHER PRIVATELY OR PUBLICLY -- THE CHURCH' S CRITICISM OF THOSE GOB POLICIES IT FINDS UNACCEPTABLE.
BOONSTRA

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973RIODE02311
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: RIO DE JANEIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730763/aaaajuil.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 STATE 119207
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16-Jan-2002 by smithrj>; APPROVED <05-Feb-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980305
Subject: CNBB LEADER CONCERNED OVER IMPLICATIONS OF ANDERSON ARTICLE
TAGS: PINS, SOCI, BR
To: STATE INFO BRASILIA
RECIFE
SAO PAULO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005